

Subject: Currency system of
British Columbia

Hitt, Henry C.

[philatelist,
Bremerton, WA]

1923

HENRY C. HITT

PHILATELIST

SPECIALIST ON THE COLONIES OF
VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, LATER
VANCOUVER ISLAND, AND
BRITISH COLUMBIA.

BOX 863 BREMERTON, WASH. U. S. A.

January 28th,
1923

The American Numismatic Society,
Broadway at 156th St.,
New York City.

Dear Sirs;

I am actively at work on a treatise on the postal history of the former British colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver's Island.

In the course of my research, which has gone deep into original sources, I have found but little to solve the puzzle of the currency systems of these two colonies. Apparently the influx of miners from the States in 1858 would introduce bodily the decimal system of currency but we find all postal affairs, and stamps, in pence until March 13, 1867.

I have several times run across the fact that British Columbia minted at least a \$10 and \$20 coinage, but have not the date of issue or other data.

*1862 none was
in circulation*

Can you refer me to sources where I can get the data on this coinage, and, particularly, any data on what minor coins were current?

It will be much appreciated by me.

Very truly,

Henry C. Hitt

February 6th, 1923

Mr. Henry Hitt
Box 863
Bremerton, Wn.

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of January 28th, we fear that we cannot give you much information with regard to the currency system of British Columbia. We can tell you this about the ten and twenty-dollar gold pieces - that it was a contemplated issue, and a few pattern coins were made in England with the date 1862. It was found, however, that these could not be issued without the sanction of the Queen and Counsel and, therefore, none were ever issued.

The only explanation that I can give for why the denomination was in dollars rather than in English currency is, as you say, owing to the influx of miners in California who probably brought in many American coins and active trading among the people; and probably many of the stores used, and accepted, dollars, but the Government never recognized anything but the pounds, shillings and pence. This state of affairs has happened, at various times, in other places. In late Colonial days and for some time after the American Government started, two systems were in use here - the old English and the new American; and for many years, although the actual money was in dollars and cents, the book accounts were kept in pounds, shilling and pence.

Very truly yours,

Curator

HW/E